



Is the "help" we get from Sparkle Wash worth what we pay?

Alan Fluharty here in Fairmont, West Virginia. Here are my honest thoughts. Sparkle Wash Headquarters (SWHQ) has improved much since I have been a franchisee. The employees, from Michael Klavora on down, are very responsive to anything they can help me with.

I recall in my training that Michael would often talk about value of service you provide. Is the "help" or any other thing we get from HQ worth what we pay? Is there something I am missing? I want Sparkle Wash to be the best it can be, but I HONESTLY can't see the value. If all the franchisees were polled and asked if they could give up their franchisee rights and go on their own, I wonder what the results would be?

I truly don't want to upset anybody with this writing but there are other franchisees out there that feel the same way and somebody has to say this. Lets all respond positive or negative. I hope that I can be proven wrong and somebody can tell me that I am getting what I pay for. I want this to work!! I just can't see it after 11 years.

Alan W. Fluharty
SparkleWash® of North Central WV
the Commercial Pressure Washing Experts
304-367-0818
alanflu@hotmail.com
www.sparklewashncwv.com

David E. Trefethen Reply

David Trefethen here in Burlington, Ontario. Alan Fluharty, I don't think the post will upset anyone. The questions are good to ask every now and then, I am sure we all ask the question, what do I get for my money?

A few of my thoughts are.

1) SparkleWash is a low-cost franchise, compared to most in the service industry, or most other industries that franchise.

We all have a wish list of what a franchiser should do for us, because we pay a royalty every month. We have to be realistic with our wish list. If I were to make a list of everything I feel the franchiser should do in exchange for my royalty. I should have bought a McDonald's or a Re Max franchise. I would have paid hundreds of thousands of dollars or a million, and the day I opened my doors Ronald McDonald would be there and I would have TV commercials, radio, and instant branding and customers day in and day out.

Reality is I could not afford the McDonald luxury. I did buy 2 Fabutan franchises before I bought SparkleWash, cost me around \$300,000 to open the 2 stores. Fabutan was the largest and promised everything. Well, they were the largest and the worst I could imagine. They only did what the agreement said and offered nothing when you needed help. 5 years

into I did double my investment, only problem is, it was on the minus end of my financials. I know a bad franchiser is and how it feels to get nothing for the royalty checks.

2) SparkleWash gives us the opportunity to go out and look at any type of work, even jobs that we could never imagine of doing with out knowing there is help only a call away. It gives us the image that is needed to make our customers comfortable that they are dealing with a company, not just another guy who decided to buy a \$300.00 washer and start calling around looking for work.

3) Good clients deal with good suppliers, in every industry.

4) Millions of dollars are spent by the big companies on image and branding. We don't have millions to spend, but we have a the SparkleWash image. It's up to each of us to bleed it for all it's worth in our areas. Even if you work alone or with a part-time helper, your customer should still see the image of a national, reputable, resourceful, knowledgeable service provider when he sees the SparkleWash logo.

As years go by, I see the royalties I pay, like insurance. I can probably get by with out the insurance, but I know when I need help it is there. The ability to go out and promote my company as a quality service provider is my job; the SparkleWash support helps me do that.

All the reasons that made me buy into SparkleWash in 2002 such as sales help, how to wash, technical help, image building are still available. I just don't need the same help I did in 2002, but the help is there and I know I have to pay for the insurance of having it there.

In 2002 I decided not to be just another power washer and in 2011 I still don't want to be just another power washer.

I also have to realize SparkleWash is in business to make money, just like we are. For my buck, I feel they do a great job. If I need something I ask. If I don't think they are doing what I need, we talk about it.

The advisory council is a great way to get the issues of concern looked at. There are good franchisers and bad ones, and SparkleWash is a good one.

Guess I rambled on long enough. Hope everyone stays warm this winter. All the best -Dave

David E. Trefethen

SparkleWash® by Trefethen
the Commercial Pressure Washing Experts

905-681-7688

dave.sparklewash@cogeco.ca

www.sparklewashbytrefethen.com

Alan W. Fluharty Reply

I really struggled when I bought my franchise and the training I received and paid \$2000.00 for did little to help me, (not included in the franchise cost). I left Cleveland not realizing this, and thought SW# 4V was a magic soap and I was going to mop up my competition with it because SW# 4V was exclusive to franchisees only .

It has gotten much better, but back then HQ never mentioned any soaps or techniques that

may work for you other than what HQ sold. I had problems with static film, mold, mildew, etc. and I went to the Internet. After literally 100's of hours of research, I learned there are forums, training, soaps, equipment, etc that are as good and some superior to "ours". One of the first thing I learned is SW# 4V's base is soda beads, which is the base for 100's of competitors cleaners. Making it essentially the same.

My point is ...I learned of a lot of opportunities while doing this research that maybe other franchisees don't realize are out there. The more I learn the more upset I become. Here is the tough question!! If HQ said I will release you from your franchisee obligation, without any strings, would you do it? Who needs whom more?

After 11 1/2 years and well over \$100,000 to HQ's and after reading Dave's answer I still don't see it.

I promise I have an open mind and do want this to work. With this being said, perhaps HQ's can come up with a solution. I am listening.

Alan W. Fluharty
SparkleWash® of North Central WV
the Commercial Pressure Washing Experts
304-367-0818
alanflu@hotmail.com
www.sparklewashncwv.com

David E Trefethen's Reply

Hello Alan, I think it is a partnership, more so than who needs who, but that's just the way I see it.

I may be off base here, but seems the issue is the franchise systems in general. I had lots of problems when I got my training, most were self-inflicted. I left Cleveland and thought what the heck am I doing. I could not remember anything I learned, had a headache for 2 weeks. each time I looked at a job or washed something, the training came back to me. I used there training as a starting point, not as the gospel. As long as I started something on the right track, it seemed to work out and when I felt I needed more help I called and got it.

Most franchisers sell the products to provide the service or end product, its how they make money and insure consistency in the system.

SparkleWash is much more relaxed (right or wrong ?) than most franchisers in the products that have to be used in the system. Every McDonald's franchisee could grill a better hamburger than the ones they have to buy, if they were allowed to buy their own beef. Many of the Sparkle Wash franchisees buy other products as well as SW# 4V. It is about how we each run our own business. I choose to buy most of my product from SW. I keep a open order and add to it as I need to and then ship it at the start of the month. I would rather try to get work or wash at whatever the hourly rate I get than look at saving whatever on my soap or other products that SW is pretty close on the price. I will buy from other suppliers when it is a rare item and it saves me a big buck or logistics are the reason.

I use SW , Lee or ED or Tom as sort of my employee. If there is a product I heard about or am interested in , I ask them to get me the pricing and what ever other info I could not find

out. I don't send them on a wild goose chase every week, but use them when I know they are better at their job and I am better at mine,. At the end of the year, if I buy 20 or 30000 in products and SW is 5 % higher, it is still not worth me spending hours and hours trying to be a part time purchasing agent.

I would look at the websites for the International franchise association, the US and Canadian association. There is lots of good info on , is a franchise a good fit, success VS failure rates. Franchises are not for everyone, but they do work for the majority of small businesses. Joining or leaving a franchise system is a big decision, lots of pros and cons.

Hope whatever direction you take works out for you.

David E. Trefethen
SparkleWash® by Trefethen
the Commercial Pressure Washing Experts
905-681-7688
dave.sparklewash@cogeco.ca
www.sparklewashbytrefethen.com

Wendell D. Lund Reply

Wendell Lund here in Barnum, Minnesota. Thanks for the honest posts. I look at SWHQ as my partner, we both have faced some very hard times, and the communication has always been open and honest! They have never tried to over sell or talk me into something I am not comfortable with. I have been in business for myself since 1982 and have never had as good a partner as HQ. (I started SW in 2000) Yes they have areas they could improve on, they are improving every year and have a open mind to suggestions.

SW# 4V- There may be cheaper or better out there- but HQ knows their products inside and out so they can help anyone at anytime! I think the more we support and communicate with HQ the more we all can improve!

Thank you HQ

Wendell D. Lund
SparkleWash® of the Northland
the Commercial Pressure Washing Experts
218-384-9292
MNsparklewash@aol.com
<http://www.sparklewashofthenorthland.com>